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ABSTRACT

A publication on the history and traditional lifestyle of the Dogrib Tribe of Canada's Northwest Territories is intended for use in grades 4-6. The text is illustrated with numerous drawings. Sections describe the caribou, spruce tree, muskox, fox, ducks and geese and their usefulness to Dogrib people. Activities covered are trading at the trading post, hunting and fishing, drying meat and fish, finding food in the bush, and making tools and weapons. Dogrib enemies, their raids on Dogrib lands, and the making of peace between the tribes are discussed. The Dogrib family and the roles of men and women are explained. Other sections cover Old Fort Rae, Dogrib chiefs, homes and tipis, feasts, cooking and eating tools, dances and drumming, sickness and medicine, and canoes. A final section gives a Dogrib legend called "The Unlucky Brides of the Old Man." (MH)

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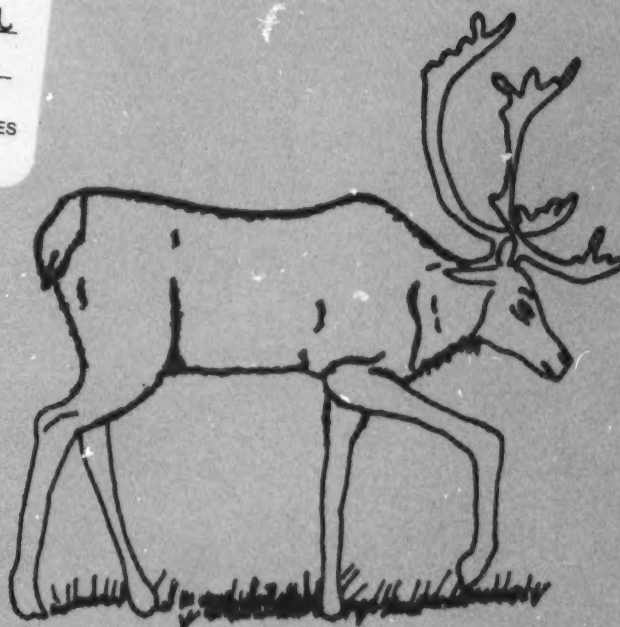
A Dogrib History



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GRADES 4-6



A DOGRIB HISTORY
Grade 4-6

This publication is part of a project developed by Tara Fraser in Rae-Edzo. Tara received "The History and Social Science Teacher" Award of Merit in 1982 for her research into the history and traditional lifestyle of the Dogrib.

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The Caribou

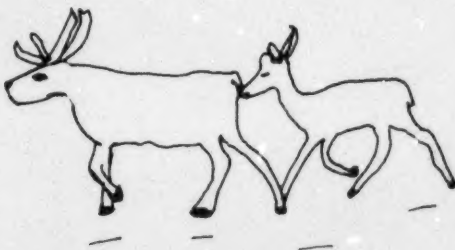


The caribou was the best animal for the Dogrib people. The Dogribs used all of the caribou. When there was no caribou in the old days the people starved to death.

Caribou skins were made into blankets, tipis, clothes, toboggans and drums.

Caribou bones were made into scrapers and knives.

The meat was good to eat. It was good cooked or dry. When meat was dry it was light and easy to carry for going on a long journey in the bush. It did not go bad.



The Spruce Tree



The spruce tree is very important for the Dogribs. They make many things from it. It is not a very big tree but it grows all around where the Dogribs live.

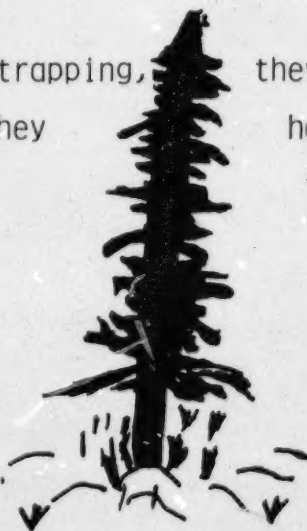
The boughs, ori, are used to make a nice soft warm floor in the tipi. To clean house the mother takes out the old boughs and puts in new ones once a week. She puts them in a pattern so that all the tips go to the middle and the hard pieces are underneath.

The wood makes a good fire and the dead wood makes a good smoke fire to keep away the bugs or to smoke meat and hides. The men make paddles, drum frames and tigwas from spruce. If you live in a log cabin see if it is made from spruce.

When the men have been trapping, their furs on boards which they out of spruce. The needles make fish nets are also spruce wood.

they stretch
have carved
they use to
cut out of

At Christmas time
use this tree for decoration.



some people

The gum from the spruce tree is put in the holes in the birch bark when a canoe is being made. This keeps the water out. Some kids like to chew this gum too. Even the roots of this tree are used. They are pulled out of the ground, then the two outside parts are taken off. The piece of white root is then used to sew the bark together. When it gets wet the root swells (gets fat) and fills the holes so the water can't get in.

Going to Trade

There were two trading posts at Old Fort Rae, the Northern Traders and the Hudson's Bay Company.

The traders at the Old Fort wanted dried meat. They wanted dried fish and furs. The traders and the Dogribs traded. The Dogribs gave dry meat and the traders gave pots, guns or some food.

The Dogribs still hunted with bows and arrows. They killed lots of caribou and made lots of dry meat.

They packed the dry meat in their canoes. The hunters paddled down the rivers and across lakes. They made many portages. Some portages were short and some portages were very long.

The hunters paddled many days to get to Old Fort Rae. They wanted to trade their dry meat to get guns so they could kill more caribou. They wanted to get flour and tea from the trader. The women wanted needles and thread and warm blankets. There were many good things to trade at the trade post.

The Trade Post

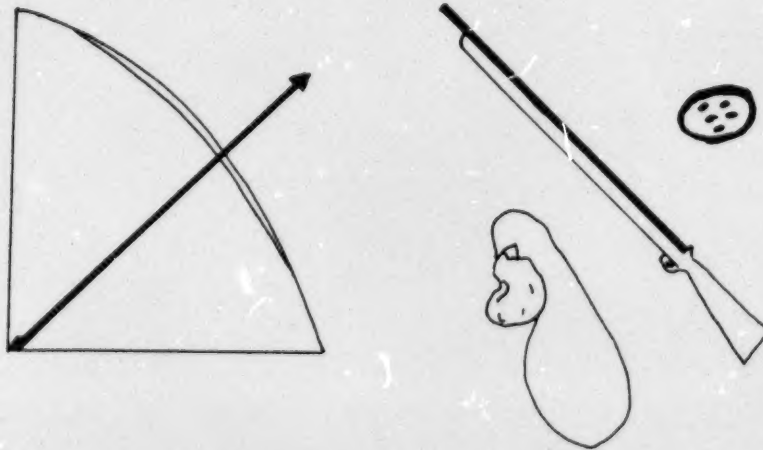
A trade post is a store. The whiteman who worked there was a trader. There was no money at this store.

When an Indian went to the trader he took dry meat and furs. The trader wanted the dry meat and the furs.

He gave the Indian some tea, ice chisels, tobacco or cloth, kettles, pots and knives. The Indians took what they wanted.

It took many furs to get a gun.

Inside the trade post there were many things. There were pots and pans, thread and cloth, axes and knives, traps and guns.



The dogrib hunter and the trader were happy to trade.

Furs and Guns

Some of the Dogrib men set dead-falls in the bush. They caught animals like the fox, lynx and wolverine. Their fur was good for trade. They saved all these furs to go to the trader. The trader always wanted lots of furs.

A hunter needed a big pile of furs to get a gun at the trading post. The trader put all the furs in a pile. He stood the gun on the floor beside the furs, then the pile of furs was measured against the gun. If the pile was high enough the hunter could have the gun and the powder and four bullets to fire it. The hunter did not get a gun for a small pile of furs.

If the pile of furs was small the hunter had to trade for other things. A small pile of furs was traded for flour, matches, tobacco, cloth or lard.

After two or three weeks the Dogribs paddled back to their camps. The women and children were happy with all the new things. It was good to trade at the trade post.

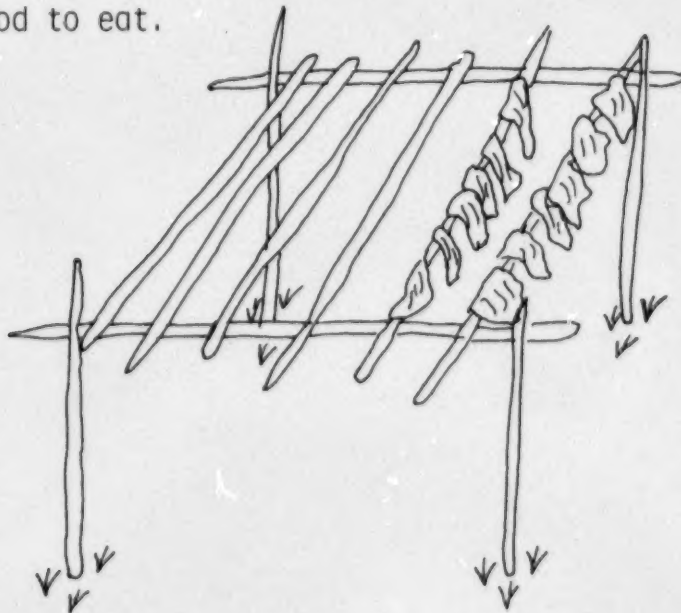
Dry Meat

The Dogrib Indians were hunters. The men hunted caribou and moose and sometimes bear.

They killed many caribou. The hunters killed the caribou with bows and arrows.

The men packed the meat to their camp. The women cut the meat and hung it on sticks to dry. The women turned the meat over every day. The sun and the wind dried the meat. Sometimes the smoke from a fire dried the meat too.

The dried meat was not heavy to pack. It did not go bad. It was good to eat.



Muskox

The muskox is a very hairy animal. It has a very warm coat which looks untidy. This coat is called a robe.

The muskox used to live between Great Bear Lake and Great Slave Lake and the Dogribs used to hunt them. This was a long time ago. There are no muskox here now.

The muskox were killed for their robes. Traders wanted the robes. The traders did not get enough drymeat sometimes so they wanted their robes instead.

Traders took the robes to Fort Edmonton and Winnipeg. The wool from the robes was made into cloth. It is very soft and warm.



Dogrib Enemies



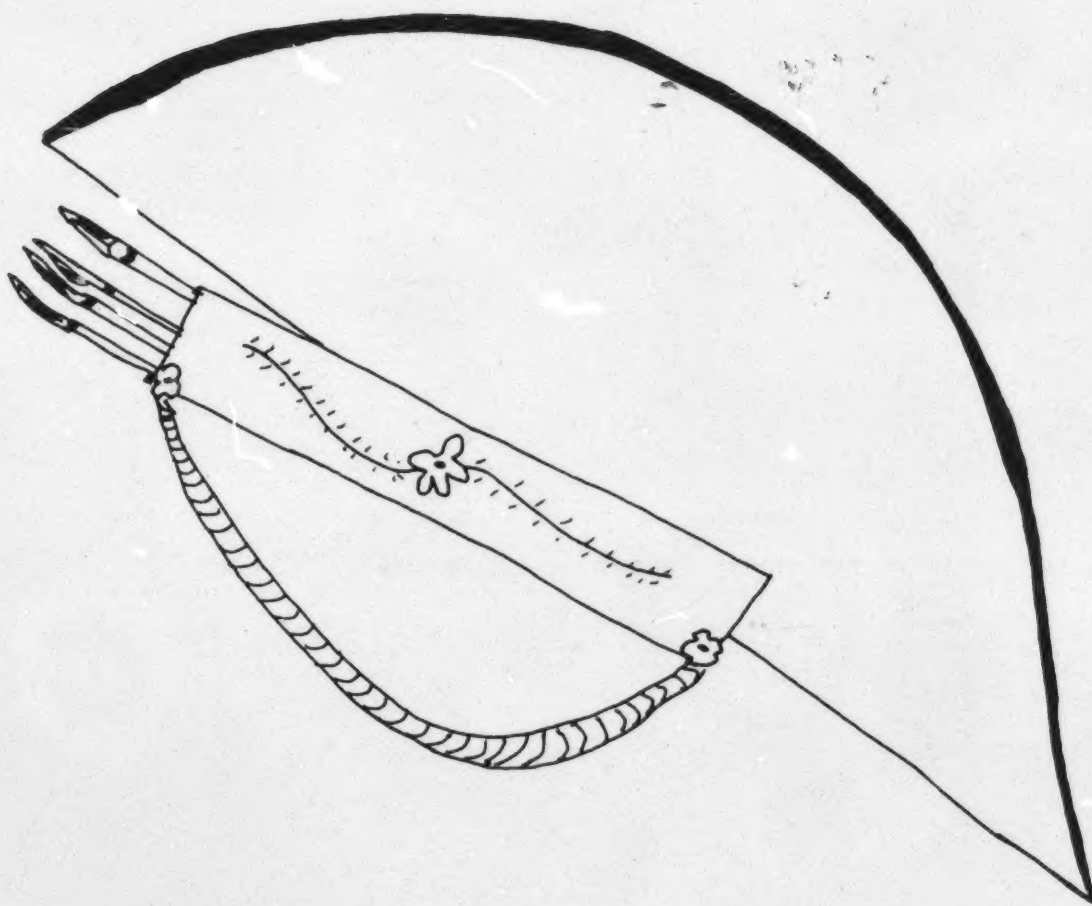
The Dogrib Indians had enemies. The enemies were the Chipewyan and Cree Indians. The enemies came to the Dogrib camps at night. They took the Dogrib's dry meat, furs and hides. They took lots of hair from the Dogribs. First they killed the Dogribs then they cut off their hair.

The enemies took these things to the Fort far away, to trade. They traded the Dogrib hair. They told the trader that it came from a water animal that lived in their country.

The Chipewyan and the Cree traded the dry meat, furs and hides and the hair for guns and supplies. With these guns they could kill more animals and more Dogribs.

The enemy went to the Dogrib lands many times.

They had guns. The Dogribs had no guns. They had only bows and arrows. They could not fight against the enemy guns.



A Dogrib Woman

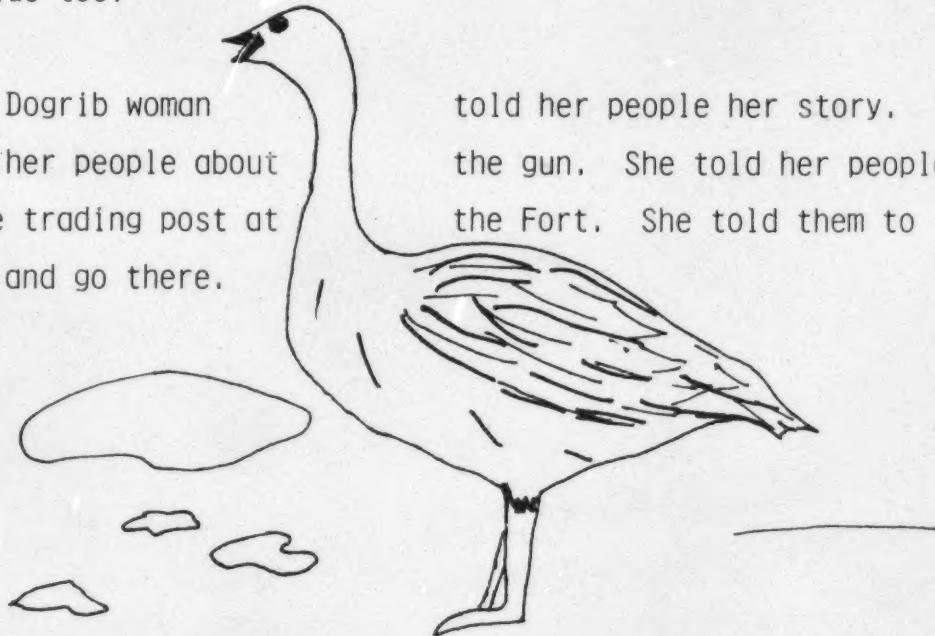
One time Chipewyan Indians came to a Dogrib camp and killed many Dogrib people. There was one woman, they did not kill. They took the woman and all the dry meat, furs and hides. They went to trade at a Fort far away across the Great Slave Lake.

The Dogrib woman got away from the Chipewyan Indians. She went to the Fort and told the Trader the hair was not from a water animal. The hair was from her own people.

The trader helped the Dogrib woman. He gave her a gun and some food for her journey back to her people. He gave her a guide too.

The Dogrib woman
She told her people about
about the trading post at
get furs and go there.

told her people her story.
the gun. She told her people
the Fort. She told them to



Making Peace

A few years after the woman came back to her camp and her people, a trading post was made at Fort Resolution. Fort Resolution was too far for the Dogribs to visit. They still had enemies.

Only a few Dogribs went to Fort Resolution. It was too far to pack dry meat and furs. The men had to spend many days away from the camp. This left the women and children alone.

The traders at Fort Resolution made a new trading post closer to the Dogrib camps. They made one at Willow Bay but no one went there. It was too far away. The traders moved to White Beach. No people came. It was still too far away.

The traders moved to an island with a big hill. The Dogribs went to trade there. The island was called Old Fort Rae. It was a good place to trade.

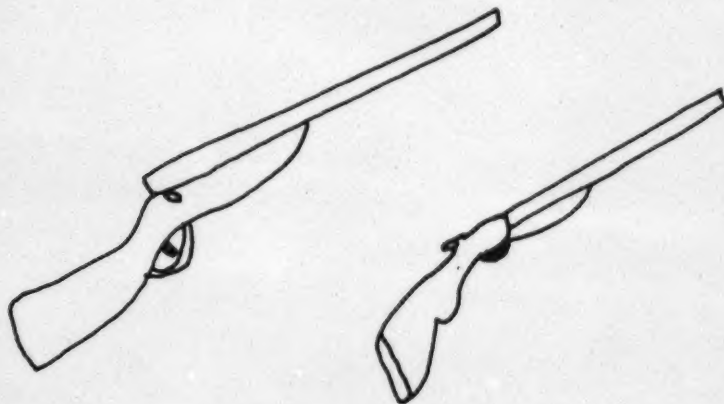
Peace Between the Tribes

One chief was Edzo. He was the chief of the Dogribs. The other chief was Akaitcho and he was chief of the Chipewyans.

The Chipewyans did not like the Dogrib people. They were always fighting wars. They wanted to take the dry meat and hides from the Dogribs. They took their women too.

Edzo did not like the wars. He did not want his people to die. He had a meeting with his brothers and Akaitcho at Raspberry Lake. When Akaitcho came he talked and talked but Edzo listened. Then Edzo said, "No more fighting. No more killing. We will be friends."

After this time there was no more fighting and the Dogribs could hunt where they liked.



The Dogrib Family

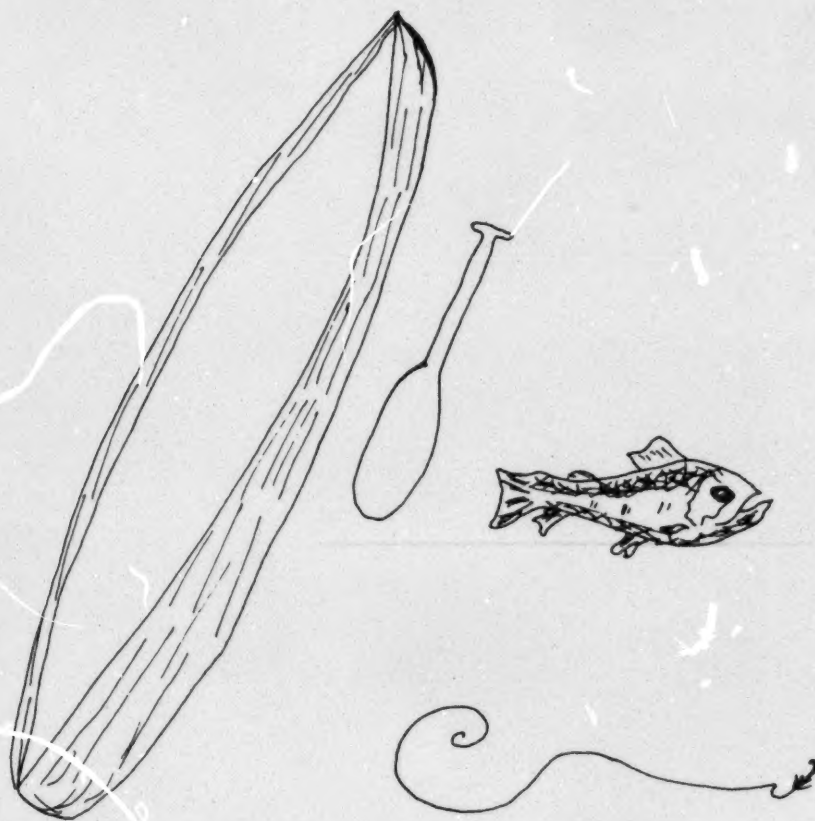
The family did lots of things. They had feasts when the men came back from hunting. They had dances when they were visited by other Dogribs. They did not see their friends very often because they were travelling in the bush looking for food most of the time. They had to look out for the Chipewyan too.

The women and the children watched the men play the handgame or wrestle. Old men and old women told stories of how things used to be when they were little kids. They told the stories their mums and dads told them. These stories are the legends you can read about or ask your mum and dad to tell you.

The Dogrib Men

The men hunted the caribou, moose and bear. They hunted with bow and arrows. They had no guns a long time ago. Snares and traps were made from twigs and sinew.

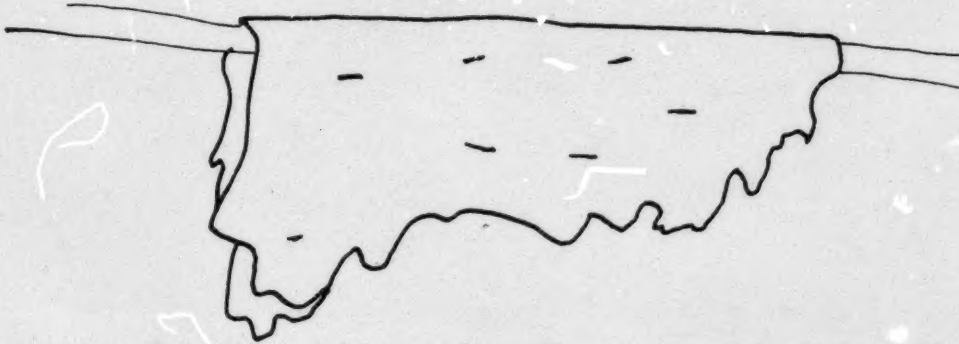
The men also went fishing. They made canoes so they could



fish and travel on the water. The men worked very hard when they hunted and fished.

The Dogrib Women

The women cooked the food for the family. They made the



moose and caribou hides soft. The women made the clothes for the men and the children.

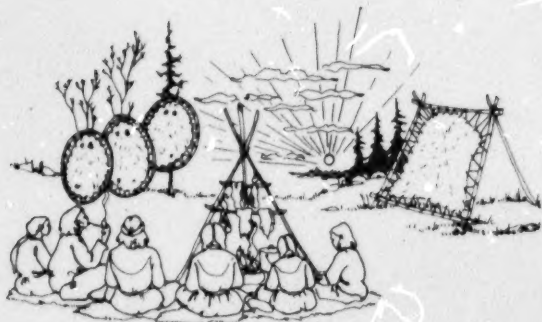
Sometimes the women would go hunting with the men. They would make lots of dry meat. The women did lots of work gathering the wood for the fires and the spruce boughs for the tipi.

The Dogrib Children

The children played. They played in the bush and in the water.

The big girls helped their mothers. They looked after the babies and learned to make clothes. The big boys helped their fathers and learned to fish and hunt. They learned to make bows and arrows and canoes.

Old Fort Rae



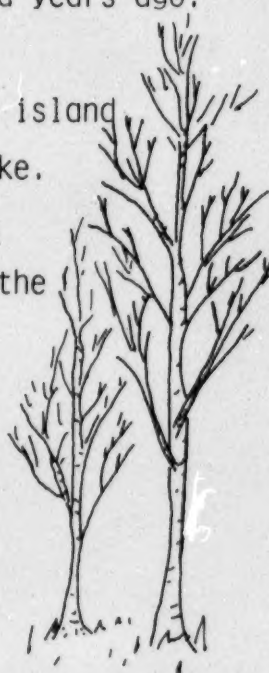
Dogribs traded dry meat and ribs to the Hudson's Bay Company trade post.

This trade post was at Fort Island or Hill Island.

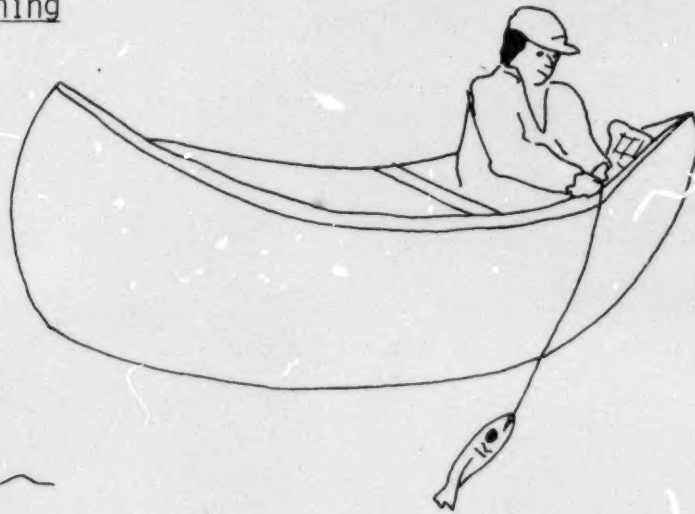
The Dogribs travelled many days to the trade post. They walked in the bush. They used canoes on the lakes and the rivers.

They traded for tea, kettles, ice chisels and knives. This was more than one hundred years ago.

There were many good trees on the island. The water was clean and deep in the lake. There were lots of fish to eat and the caribou went close by on their way to the Barrens.



Fishing



Some of the fish you know are,

Fish	<u>lue</u>
Jack	ihda
Trout	<u>luezo</u>
Whitefish	<u>li</u>
Pickereel	ech'e

Fish can be caught in a gill net. Fish can be caught on a hook and line or with a spear. When going in the boat in the summer it is good to drop a line in the water so you can catch a fish as you go along.

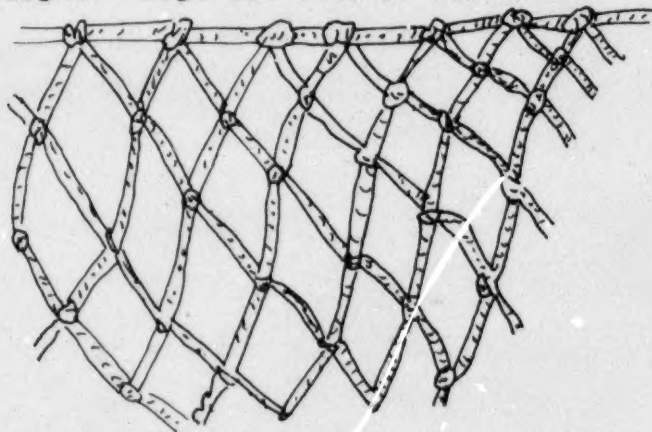
Nets used to be made out of willow bark but they broke when they were dry. Nets used by the Dogribs are bought at the store. Some men still make their own with a wooden needle. The nets have rocks on the bottom to keep them down

in the water. Wooden floats keep the top of the net from falling down into the water.

Men fish in the winter with nets. Men fish in the summer with nets. In the winter it is hard to get through the ice sometimes. An ede must be strong to go through the ice.

Ehgwa Dryfish

Dryfish stays good for a long time.
Dryfish is easy to pack. It is not heavy. Dryfish is good to eat when there are no fresh fish to be caught. Dogs eat lots of fish.



The pattern a gill fishnet makes. Look at the knots which keep it together.

Many fish are caught in a net. Many people can eat these fish.

In winter it is cold work to set a net. It is cold work to check a net too.

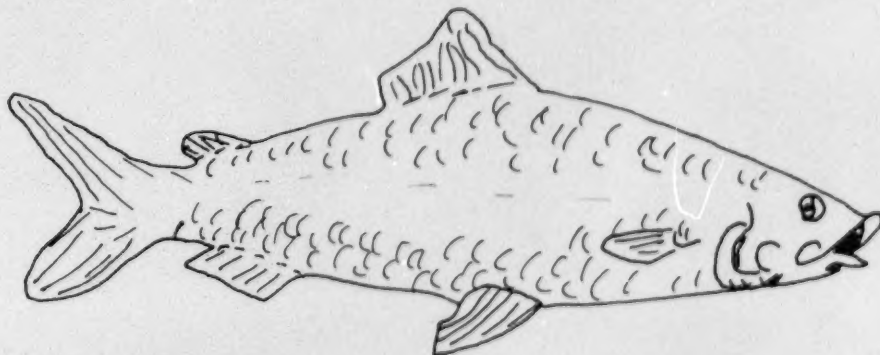
To set a net you need an ede, a mi, a tigwa, some kew and some dechi.

To set a net you need an ice chisel, a net, an ice scoop, some rocks and some sticks.

Some people used a spear to catch fish. You must be fast to catch a fish with a spear.

Some people went jigging with a line. Only one or two fish are caught this way.

If the ice chisel broke or was left at the camp site you could make a hole in the ice with hot rocks from the fire.



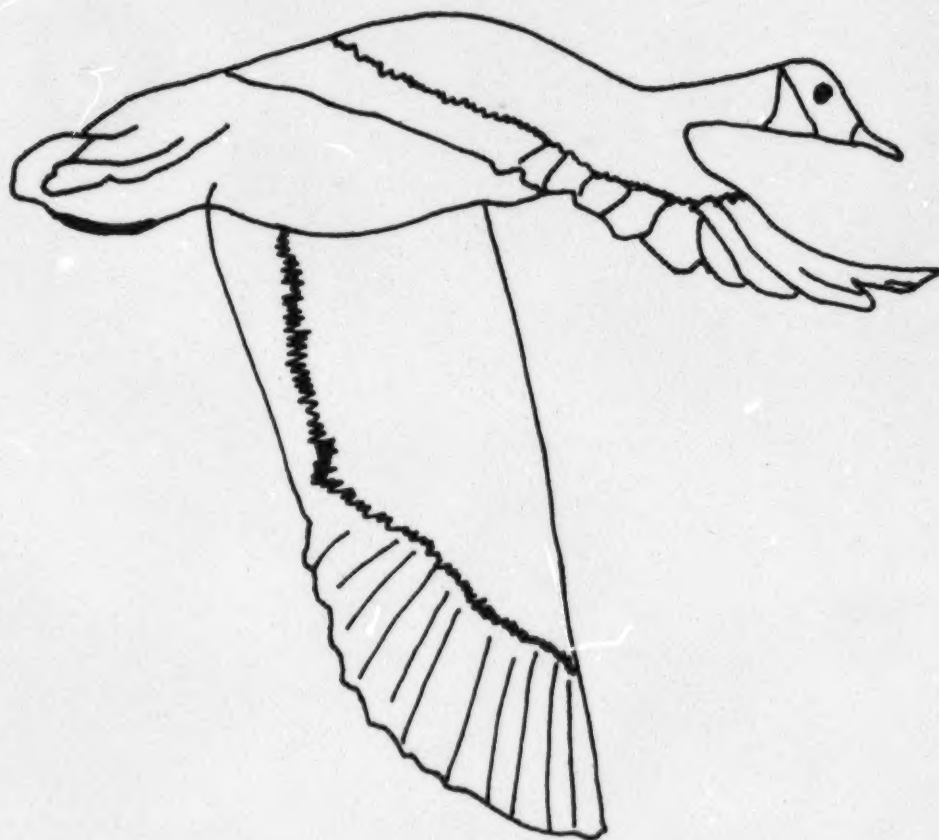
Food in the Bush

When a caribou was killed, everybody had good meat. Blood soup was good too. The marrow from the bones was good to poke out with your fingers or a stick.

Sometimes when there was no caribou to kill, the Dogrib people had to eat what they could find in the bush. There were lots of rabbits some years and there were chickens and ptarmigan.

When there was no meat the people ate fish. As the summer gets hot the fish go down into the deep part of the lake where the water is colder. Then it is hard to catch the fish.





The Dogribs eat all kinds of berries which grow in the bush. They can make tea from a plant called Labrador Tea. The leaves are boiled in water, then taken out before drinking. If you need sugar get some sap from the birch tree and put it in the tea.

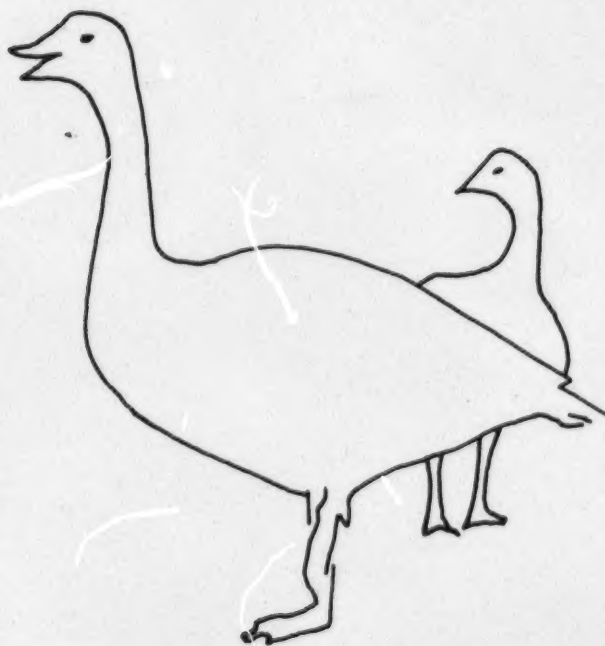
The black lichen called Rock Tripe was gathered and put in soup to make it thick or banged between rocks to make it like flour. It was mixed with little pieces of fish or meat.

Ducks and Geese

Ducks are good to eat. You can shoot them with a gun -
In the old days the Dogribs hunted ducks with bows and arrows.
Geese are bigger but not as easy to kill as ducks.

Some of the ducks which live here in the summer are
Mallard, Blackduck and Teals.

For a very special lunch a Loon tastes very good.



The Fox

Foxes are trapped for their fur. Some foxes are shot if a trapper sees them in the bush. Their fur is good in the winter. It is thick. There are many different colours of fur. Some are silver, red, black or the little fox which lives up with the Eskimos is white in winter and a brown colour in the summer.

Foxes are very clever animals. They are good hunters.

They weigh about ten pounds and are about the size of a dog. They bark too. Foxes eat rabbits, mice and chickens or ducks. They can easily catch a little mouse running across the ground because they are fast runners and see very well.

Dogribs do not eat fox meat. They only kill the foxes for their fur.



Tools and Weapons



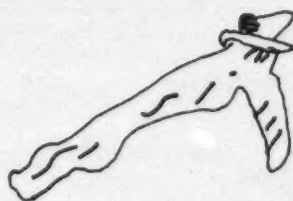
Awl for making holes,



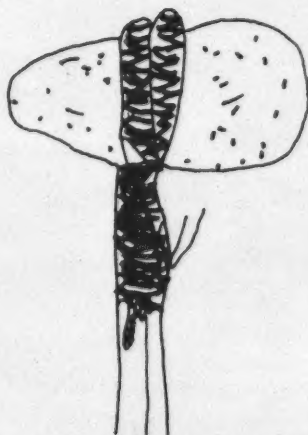
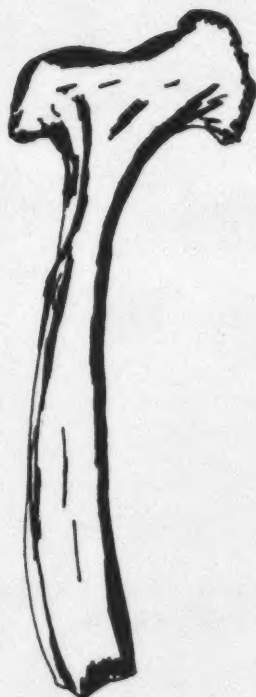
Clubs for killing
small animals



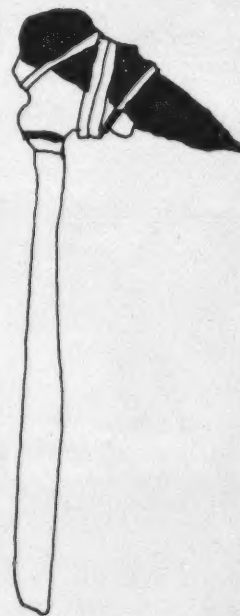
Hammer



For digging

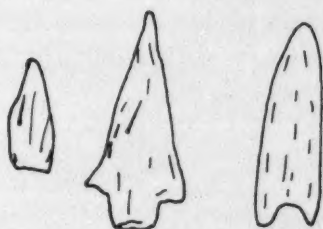


Bone club and a stone club for killing,



An axe

These are stone heads for arrows or spears,
they have been made by banging rocks together.



The men put handles on these rocks.

The handles are tied on with babiche.



The rocks are hard. The rocks are sharp.

The rock points can kill a small animal.



Before the traders came to the Dogrib country the people made their own tools. They made an axe and knife from sharp rocks and wooden handles. Sometimes they used bone from the caribou or moose. They soaked them in fat to make them hard and heavy.

They made awls, for punching holes in the hide from bone.

The women used needles made from bone to do their sewing. They were very sharp. A long piece of bone was cut and made very thin and pointed. They were not very strong but there were many to choose from.

This man is
rubs together
small sharp
for arrows
He has some
made on the
him.



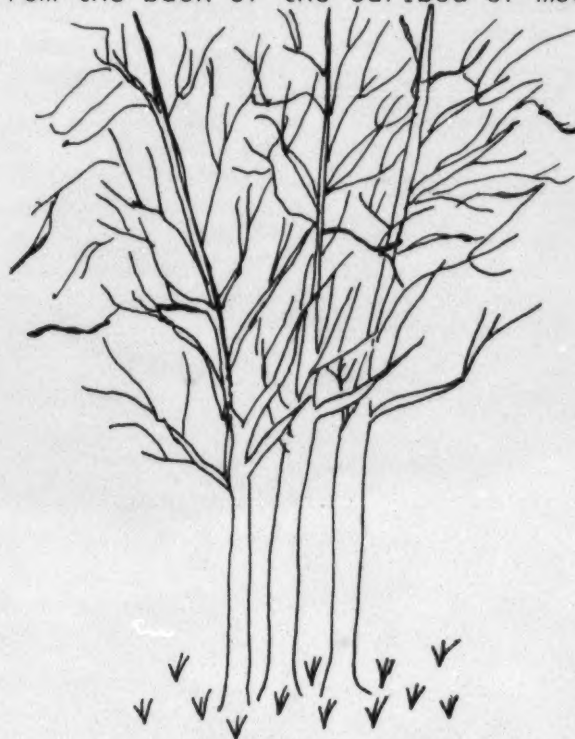
banging
to make
pieces
or spears.
already
rock beside

Weapons

To make bows, arrows and spears the Dogribs used wood, rocks and babiche or hide.

Pointed rocks were used for the spears and arrows. Some arrows had blunt ends too.

The bow was made from a straight piece of willow. The wood had no knots in it. The strings of the bow was sinew. Sinew comes from the back of the caribou or moose.



The arrow was made from small straight sticks. The arrowhead was tied on with babiche. Feathers were tied at the other

end. The men used eagle feathers because they made no noise in the air.

The men were very good at killing with the bow. They hunted caribou, bear and moose, ducks and chickens. They used lots of arrows. They used one arrow many times. If one was broken it was fixed and used again. The animals were searched after they had been killed to get the arrow point out of the meat.

They saved the feathers and the points to use again.

Chiefs

In the old times the leader of the people was called the headman. He was the best hunter. He was the wisest man. He could look after all his people.



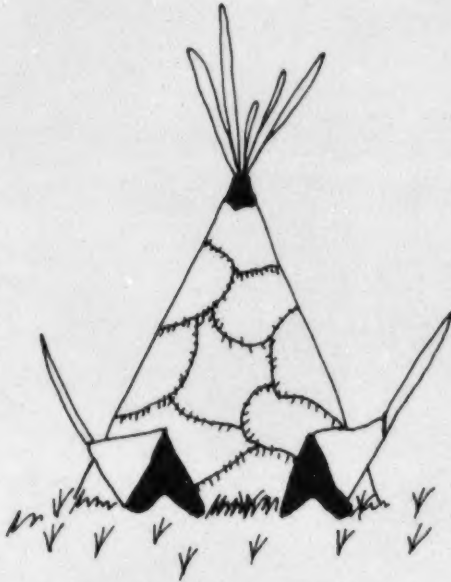
The headman was the man who made the plans for things to be done. There were other leaders in the group but he was the head one. They talked together and did what was best for all the people.

Since the time when the Dogribs signed the Treaty they have had a chief, not a headman. He is elected by the people in an election. It is not the same as before. The best man may not be chosen as the chief. A chief is the man who gets the most votes in an election.

A long time ago Edzo was the Dogrib headman. He told Akaitcho there was to be no more fighting. Akaitcho was the headman of the Chipewyan Indians. They were the enemies of the Dogribs.

Our chief is Joe Migwi. Other men who have been chiefs for the Dogribs of Rae-Edzo are, Charlie Charlo, Jimmy Bruneau and Alexis Arrowmaker.

Shelter, Homes and Tipis



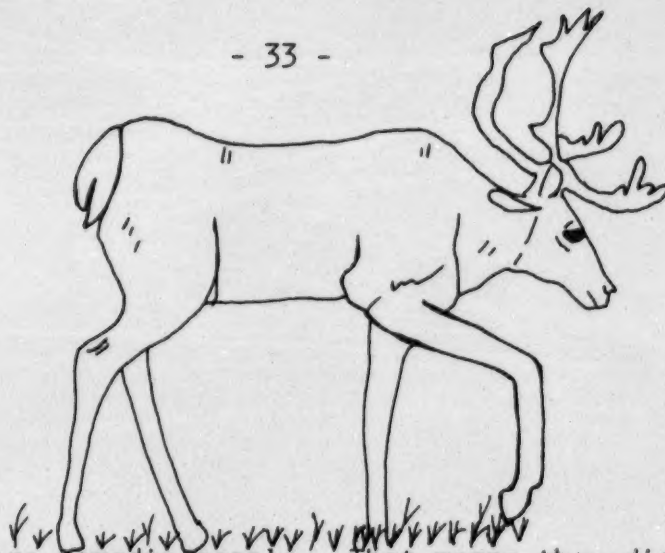
An old time tipi was made from caribou hide. In the winter a tipi was made from hides with the hair on the outside. In the summer tanned or smoked hides were used.

Sometimes there were not enough big pieces to make a tipi so smaller pieces had to be used. They were all sewn together with sinew. It was a lot of work for the women.

When the poles were put up, the cover was placed over them and fitted as best it could. A flap for a door was left open or closed. It was tied shut on the inside to keep the snow or wind out.

To put up a tipi everyone in the family helped. It was not easy to do on your own. The poles for a large tipi were very long so someone had to hold them. These poles were mostly spruce. The cover was put over these poles and pegged in the ground with sticks. Sometimes rocks were used to keep the bottom of the tipi down.

Feasts

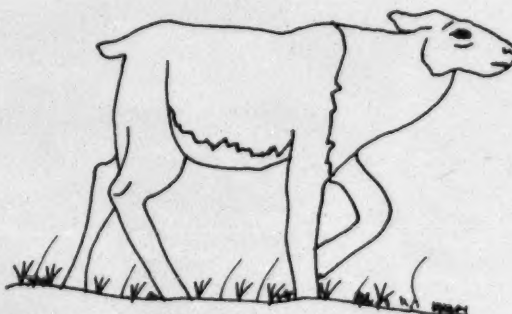


Dogribs were nomadic people. That means they did not live in the same place for a long time. They liked to move camp to be with the caribou. They liked to camp where there was a lot of fish. They liked a place where there was wood for the fire and poles for the tipi.

When the people met friends they were happy. As they moved their camps other Dogribs were moving too and they went to the same places sometimes. Other times they went to different places. When they met it was a good time to have a feast.

At the feast everybody shared all the food, all the stories and the news. They talked about all the things which had happened since the last time they shared the same camp.

In the old days the people were always moving, but not now. Most people have a house in Rae.



Christmas and Easter and after a caribou hunt is the time for feasts. They are held in the Community Hall. In the old times the feasts were outside on the rocks or in the bush.

The people share the work. There are speeches and a dance.

Some of the foods eaten at a feast are caribou, rice, oranges, bread and bannock. It is a lot of fun at a feast.



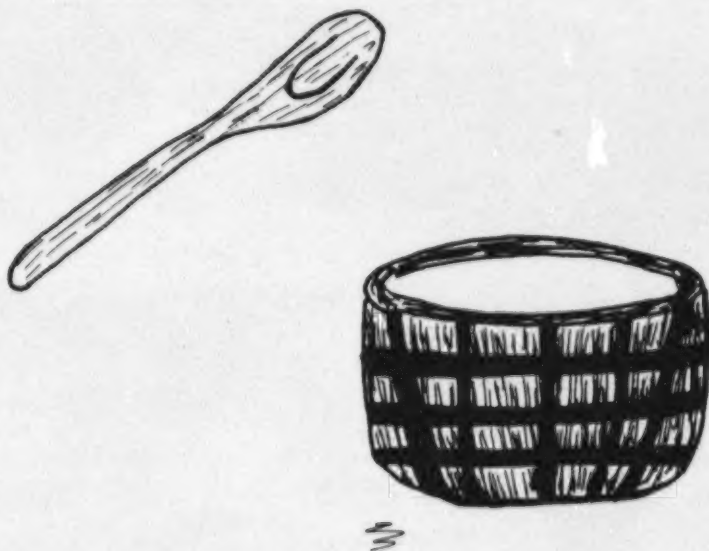
Cooking and Eating Tools

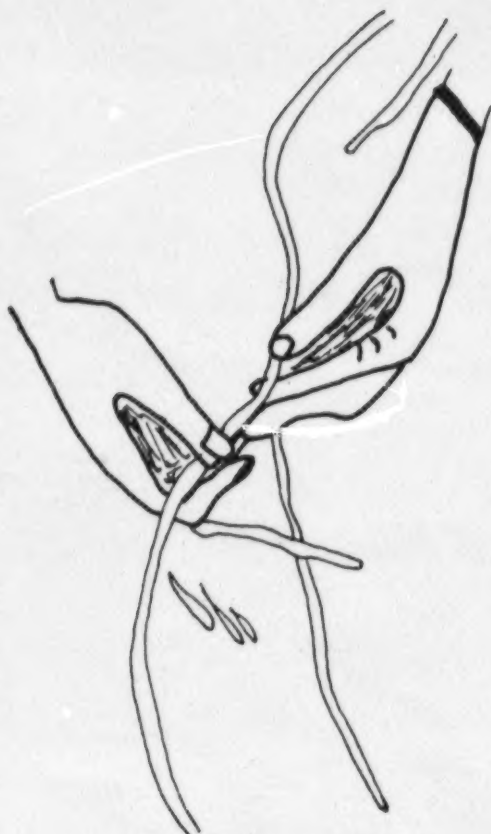
Plates and cooking pots were made from birch bark. They were sewn together with roots from the spruce tree.

A knife was made from the bone of a caribou or a sharp piece of rock, cut very thin.

A spoon was made of caribou bone or wood. Some plates were made from wood too.

The women made the baskets or pots for cooking in.





This lady is splitting a spruce root into three so that she can sew up a pot she is making. The holes are made with a punch or awl made from caribou antler.

The pots she made were called, k'ihto and k'ik'wa. One is for cooking, the other is a plate.

The bark was soaked in water to make it soft so she could make any shape that she wanted. When the bark dried it was hard again.

Dances and Drumming



Dances tell about happy times. Dances tell about sad times. When the people get together after a hunt or for the Christmas and Easter celebrations they like to have a dance. It is a time to be happy.

The dances move in circles or lines. Many people dance at the same time. The men sing and play the drums. They play until they are very hot then change with another drummer.

Most Indians and Eskimo have a drum which they play. Drums are made from wood and rawhide from the caribou. To make it sound good the drummers heat their drums before they play them. The music is the voices of the men and the beat of the drum. Some dances last all night. Some dances are outside if the weather is good.

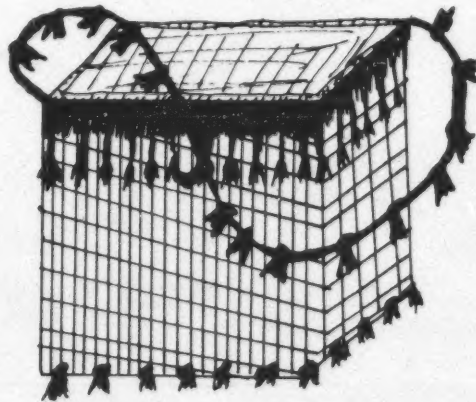
Sickness and Medicine

Medicines were made from things which the Dogribs found in the bush.

To stop bleeding they put spruce gum on the cut. A bandage made from a strip of caribou hide was tied around it.

For pains in the tummy kwetsi was boiled in water. The sick person had to drink the water. Kwetsi is the lichen which grows on the rocks. It is called Rock Tripe.

Berries, bark and roots were made into medicine. Fat from the beaver was used to make medicine.



The Canoe

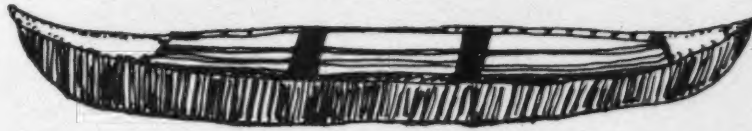
The men made canoes with wood and birch bark. The wood sticks were tied together with willow roots or sinew to make the frame of the canoe.



The birch bark was made soft by soaking it in water then put over the frame.

The holes were filled with the sticky gum from the spruce tree. This stopped all the water from getting into the canoe.





This is a Dogrib birch bark canoe. If you look at the ends you will see that they are covered in. This is to keep the water out.

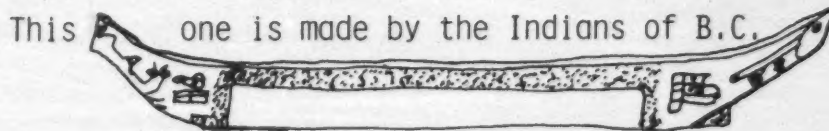
These other canoes were used by other Indians who did not live in the same places as the Dogribs. They used different things to make their canoes or boats.



This is a moose hide boat, made on the Mackenzie River.



This is a kayak made by the Eskimo. How many people can sit in this one?



The Unlucky Brides of the Old Man

A long time ago the Beaver People and the Blackfoot People lived close to each other. The camps were happy. The People had lots to eat and the two chiefs were good friends. There was one old man in the Beaver camp who was not happy. He had no wife. She had died.

The chief of the Blackfoot had a young girl. She was very beautiful. She wanted to marry the old man. The old man wanted to marry her. The chief said it was O.K. There was a big feast with dancing and story telling. Everyone had a great time. The feast and dancing lasted for three days.

In spring time the Beaver People went hunting. The young girl went with the old man. Her father was not happy to see his daughter not at the camp. When there was no one in the camp, the Blackfoot People were not happy. The chief told them to get packed. It was time for them to go hunting the buffalo. There was no one left in the camp.

The old man and the girl did not camp with the other People. The old man camped beside a creek. He went hunting and left the girl in the camp. When he came back he had many beaver. The girl did not know how to skin a beaver. The young girl did not know how to make clothes with the beaver. The old man had to show her what to do. After some time the girl was still no good. She spoiled many skins so the old man did the work himself.

Again he went hunting and came back with many skins. He saw a young man leave the camp. The old man did not ask his wife who the man was. He sat down to do some work and eat a meal. Later he said to his wife, "I am going hunting again, I don't know how long I will be."

The old man made a camp close by the path where the young man had gone. He waited three days and when the young man came by he said "Young man I eat by myself. Come and eat with me." The young man was happy to have some food and sat down by the fire. Suddenly the old man jumped up and killed the young man with his knife.

The old man put the blood of the young man inside a beaver. He took it back to his wife. "Cook this, over the fire. I will catch the blood in a pot." When the young woman did not drink the hot blood the old man threw it in her face. Then he cut out her heart.

The old man went back to the winter camp. The Beaver People were happy to see all the people again. The old man did not tell what he had done to his wife. He said she did not come back to his camp.